



**Planning and Building Department**

**TO: Community Development Committee**

**SUBJECT: Employment Lands Study**

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Report Number: PB-37/11

File Number(s): 505-01

Report Date: June 3, 2011

Ward(s) Affected: 1  2  3  4  5  6  All

Date to Committee: June 20, 2011

Date to Council: July 4, 2011

**Recommendation:** **RECIEVE** the report prepared by MKI/MMM Group Entitled dated May 7, 2011 and entitled "Burlington Employment Land Study, 2011" and distributed under separate cover;

**DIRECT** the Director of Planning and Building to consider the findings of the Employment Land Review in the Five Year Review of the City's Official Plan, and in particular to address the matters set out in report PB-37/11;

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**Purpose:**

- Address goal, action or initiative in strategic plan
  - Establish new or revised policy or service standard
  - Respond to legislation
  - Respond to staff direction
  - Address other area of responsibility
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**Reference to Strategic Plan:**

Economic Development 4.1 Maintain a timely supply and variety of employment lands for the needs of a broad range of business investors and employers; and protect employment land from conversion to incompatible and non-complementary uses.

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**Background:**

July 15, 2010, Council approved Confidential Report PB-61/10 with the following resolution:  
"Direct staff to undertake a comprehensive study of the City's employment area as the initial study of the Official Plan Review, which may include the retention of an outside consultant(s)."

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## **Discussion:**

- Request for Proposals** A Request for Proposals to complete the employment land review was issued on September 10, 2010 with a deadline for submissions of October 8, 2010. The Terms of Reference for the study identified the key components of the project to include;
- analysis of the trends in employment uses in southern Ontario and the implications for demand for employment land
  - updating of the supply of vacant, developable employment land
  - calculation of the demand for employment land to the planning horizon of 2031 and having regard for the targets established under the Provincial Growth Plan
  - strategies and options for the City to meet growth objectives

The consortium of Metropolitan Knowledge Incorporated (MKI) and MMM Group Ltd was the successful proponent retained to carry out this work on behalf of the City.

- Strategy/Process** A staff steering group comprised of representatives from Planning and Building, Burlington Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) and the Region of Halton led the consultant team.

Together the group completed an inventory and mapping of lands designated for employment uses in the City's Official Plan. The steering group met with the consultants at key points in the study to review the findings.

- Key Study Findings** The study's key findings and recommendations are set out in detail in Section 6 of the consultants' report. In summary, the report concludes:
- the city's economy is shifting from traditional industrial and manufacturing to service and/or office-based employment.
  - Based on the employment forecasts, and using the Province's mandated methodology to calculate land needs, the city will require between 175ha to 225 ha of employment land to accommodate the Region's allocation of growth of 106,000 jobs to the horizon year of 2031 (17,574 incremental jobs)

- Taking into account standard vacancy factors of 5% structural vacancy, the city has an effective supply of 298 ha of employment lands.
- There are some constraints to the city's inventory particularly with respect to the limited number of large parcels and those in excess of 3ha which have highway access.
- The City should complete a policy review to address specific considerations, including;
  - identification of strategic lands that should be retained as employment lands based on their size, location and physical attributes
  - a determination of the appropriateness of permitting non-employment uses on employment lands
  - consideration of allowing flexibility for conversions involving remediation of brownfield sites and for allowing a broader mix of uses on a site by site basis.
  - development of conversion criteria to provide a balance between employment goals and other policy objectives.

### **Historical Context**

As the consultants' study notes, since 2001 there have been approximately ten studies completed examining the adequacy of the city's employment land supply to meet forecasted demand. Historically, in calculating employment land demand, consultants have used a vacancy factor of 25% to account for a proportion of lands that, for various reasons, may never develop, and to include a buffer in the land supply to provide for opportunities of choice in the market place. In 2006, the Province approved *Places to Grow* which includes provisions for protecting employment land supply. In implementing *Places to Grow*, the Province has consistently advised municipalities that the use of a 25% vacancy factor is not acceptable. In practice, a 5% vacancy factor has emerged as a reasonable allowance. To ensure consistency with current Provincial guidelines, the current study completed by MKI/MMM on behalf of the City, uses this 5% factor in calculating net land supply.

### **Public Consultation**

The Employment Lands Study is a technical study prepared as a background paper to the Official Plan review. The original Terms of Reference did not include a consultation

component. At the request of interested landowners an opportunity for stakeholder input was added. Two stakeholder sessions were held early on in the study process to seek insight into issues surrounding development of employment lands. Stakeholders were identified by the Burlington Economic Development Corporation and included representatives from the development industry, realtors and manufacturers. The notes of the two sessions are contained as Appendix B to the consultant's report.

### **Next Steps**

The work completed by the consultants has determined that there is sufficient land to meet the employment targets set by the Provincial Growth Plan and allocated to Burlington by the Region of Halton. With the study findings in hand, staff is now in a position to consider those findings in a policy context. The policy review will be completed as part of the Official Plan review to address the matters identified by the consultants and set out in the Key Findings section of this report.

In the nearer term, the study's findings may be useful in Council's consideration of two matters. Planning staff will be reporting to Council on the IKEA proposal and on the appropriate land use designation for the Tremaine Dundas lands. The employment land review will provide some additional information and context for the review of those two matters.

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### **Financial Matters:**

#### **Total Financial Impact**

The study was completed a total cost of \$89,436.68. This included the original contract in the amount of \$78,422.00 and an additional \$11,014.68 to complete the stakeholder consultation.

#### **Source of Funding**

PB-71/10 approved by Council on September 7, 2010 authorized that \$101,000 identified in the 2011 capital forecast of the 2010 Capital Budget be pre-approved along with the approved 2010 capital funding of \$50,000 in project account OP0008 to fund consultant costs to prepare the comprehensive employment lands review.

**Other Resource Impacts**

N/A

**Communication Matters:**

The stakeholders who attended the two sessions have been advised of the tabling of this report to Council. The report was made available on the City’s website and by request through the Planning and Building Department.

**Conclusion:**

The report prepared by MKI/MMM Group Limited meets the terms of reference for the employment land review. The findings of the study will now be used in the preparation of corresponding policy as part of the Official Plan Review, and will provide context for other matters to be considered by Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Gummo, MCIP RPP  
 Manager of Policy and Research  
 X 7477

**Notifications:**

(after Council decision)

Name	Mailing or E-mail Address
List of Stakeholders	Provided to Clerk’s

**Approvals:**

\*required

\_\_\_\_\_ \*Department    \_\_\_\_\_ City Treasurer    \_\_\_\_\_ General Manager    \_\_\_\_\_ City Manager

To be completed by the Clerks Department	
Committee Disposition & Comments	
	01-Approved 02-Not Approved 03-Amended 04-Referred 06-Received & Filed 07-Withdrawn
Council Disposition & Comments	
	01-Approved 02-Not Approved 03-Amended 04-Referred 06-Received & Filed 07-Withdrawn